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A Decade of CIL

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Abstract

This editorial commemorates the ten year anniversary of Communications in Information Literacy.

Keywords: Communications in Information Literacy; open access; publishing; information literacy; library and information sciences; scholarship

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A Decade of CIL

During the spring of 2006, my University at Buffalo colleague Stew Brower and I commenced with an ambitious experiment to create an open access journal devoted to the field information literacy in higher education. The impetus for this was multifaceted. To begin, the journal *Research Strategies* had ceased publication the previous year, and though many disciplinary journals were publishing papers on information literacy, none remained that were held to that particular purview. Of equal consideration, Stew and I were outspoken critics of many journal publishers, and we recognized the burgeoning alternative possibilities of the open access movement.

The development of our idea required a year of effort: evenings, weekends, and countless lunch meetings at the locally popular Pizza Plant. The title *Communications in Information Literacy* (CIL) was given to this enterprise; we believed that this best conveyed our intent to create a specialized space for scholarly discourse among practitioners and researchers in the field. Early on, Stew's main responsibility was to adopt an appropriate platform and to mold it according to our vision. (We relied heavily on the technical expertise of Stew's wife, Molly.) My primary functions were to assemble an editorial board that would quickly establish reputability, and to solicit standard bearing contributions for the first issue. We shared marketing, editing, and production duties.

CIL was officially launched in May of 2007 at the 36th Annual Workshop on Instruction in Library Use in Toronto. As detailed in Stew's subsequently published "[Growing Pains](#)" editorial (2007), the initial response was overwhelming; the wave of enthusiastic feedback and the numbers of registered users, unique site visits, article downloads, and manuscript submissions exceeded our greatest expectations. And so it went.

Notwithstanding 2009 Stew's move to the University of Oklahoma, CIL's growth continued unabated. During the first four years it was necessary to expand the ranks of our manuscript reviewers three times, and by 2012 it was clear that editorial expansion was also necessary to accommodate the volume of workflow and to offer a wider variety of discourse for our readership. That year we welcomed aboard Bob Schroeder from Portland State University as co-editor-in-chief. (It cannot be overstated that Bob was a critical fit in terms of the journal moving forward.) In 2014, Kim Leeder Reed and Sarah North joined the CIL family to

develop its Perspectives Section—now edited by Carolyn Gamtso. Also in 2014, we welcomed Merinda McLure into the fold to create the journal's new Book Reviews Section and to serve as its editor. And all the while CIL was buttressed by an editorial board that remains—name for name—a force of leadership in the information literacy community.

The first decade of CIL included numerous highlights: among them, three themed issues and one that was guest-edited by Sarah McCord and Terry Taylor. For eight years we enjoyed thoughtful “Teacher Matters” columns contributed by Pat Ragains and Janelle Zauha. Several of our authors had papers that were recognized by the ALA Library Instruction Round Table's Top Twenty Committee. The journal itself was honored with a Special Certificate of Recognition and Appreciation from the Association of College and Research Libraries Instruction Section. There was also a noteworthy ascent of the journal's overall impact and ranking; as the decade comes to a close, CIL's Scimago Journal Rank has climbed to spot number 33 among 209 journals in the library field.

We proceed into the second decade of publication with the philosophy that no single element of CIL is more or less important than the others: editors, editorial board, manuscript reviewers, authors, or readership. Our editorial team—Stew, Bob, Carolyn, Merinda, and I—are tightly knit, devoted to the cause, and having fun. Members of the CIL board, many of whom have served from the outset, are enthusiastically supportive. We have benefited from the hard work and engagement of our volunteer reviewers whose critical minds help us to challenge authors to create the best scholarship possible. We have met many new authors and feel fortunate to continue sharing their research and opinions. And we are constantly amazed by the lively interaction we have with our readership; they continue to inspire our efforts with their passionate feedback, which is sometimes critical but always supportive. Altogether, these are the interrelated constituents of a vibrant community of practice and scholarship that we are privileged to be a part of and to serve.

References

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